

**Claims:**

A listing of the entire set of pending claims is submitted herewith. This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application.

**Listing of Claims:**

1. (currently amended) A method for securely managing and monitoring a data network, said data network comprising a plurality of network components, said method comprising:

connecting a network management system to a non-network port of each of said network components;

managing each of said network components through said non-network port; and

monitoring each of said network components through said non-network port;

wherein monitoring each of the network components comprises periodically sampling the network configuration of each of the network components by the system monitor, and comparing the sampled network configurations to stored network configurations at the network management system.

2. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein connecting a network management system to a non-network port of each of said plurality of network components comprises:

connecting a network management system to a terminal server; and

connecting said terminal server to said non-network port of each of said network components.

3. (original) A method in accordance with claim 2 further including establishing communication between said network management system and said terminal server via TCP/IP.

4. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 2 further including establishing communication between said terminal server and said plurality of network components via [TCP/IP] RS-232.

5. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein said network management system includes a configuration manager, said method further comprising:  
configuring said plurality of network components from said configuration manager through said non-network port of each of said network components.

6. (cancelled)

7. (cancelled)

8. (cancelled)

9. (currently amended) A method in accordance with claim 1 wherein a terminal server is connected between said network management system and said plurality of network components and wherein said step of monitoring each of said plurality of network components comprises:

polling each of said plurality of network components by said terminal server responsive to [said] a system monitor.

10. (original) A method in accordance with claim 1 further comprising:

initiating communication between said network management system and said plurality of network components only from said network management system.

11. (currently amended) An apparatus for secure monitoring of network components in a data network comprising:

a plurality of network components, each of said plurality of network components having a data network port connected to said data network and each of said plurality of network components having a non-network port; and

a network management system connected to each of said plurality of network components at said non-network port and configured so that only said network management system may initiate communication with said plurality of network components;

wherein the network management system is configured to monitor each of the network components by periodically sampling the network configuration of each of the network components, and comparing the sampled network configurations to stored network configurations at the network management system.

12. (cancelled)

13. (original) An apparatus in accordance with claim 11 further including a terminal server connected between said network management system and said plurality of network components.

14. (original) An apparatus in accordance with claim 13 wherein said terminal server is configured to poll said plurality of network components.

15. (original) An apparatus in accordance with claim 11 wherein said data network ports comprise serial ports.

16. (original) An apparatus in accordance with claim 11 wherein said data network ports comprise RS232 ports.

17. (new) A method for securely managing and monitoring a data network, said data network comprising a plurality of network components, said method comprising:

connecting a network management system to a non-network port of each of said network components;

managing each of said network components through said non-network port; and

monitoring each of said network components through said non-network port;

wherein managing each of said network components comprises deploying a network configuration of each of the network components from stored network configurations at the network management system.

18. (new) A method for securely managing and monitoring a data network, said data network comprising a plurality of network components, said method comprising:

connecting a network management system to a non-network port of each of said network components;

managing each of said network components through said non-network port; and

monitoring each of said network components through said non-network port;

wherein monitoring each of said network components comprises periodically sampling the network configuration of each of the network components by the system monitor, and comparing the sampled network configurations to stored network configurations at the network management system; and

wherein managing each of said network components comprises deploying a network configuration of each of the network components from stored network configurations at the network management system.